



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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MEDIA CONTACT: Nancy Rodriguez

Office: (502) 564-2000 **Cell:** (502) 330-5063

E-mail: nancy.rodriguez@education.ky.gov

STUDENTS SCORE HIGHER ON EXPLORE AND PLAN TESTS

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) –Kentucky students scored higher on EXPLORE and PLAN tests in 2012, registering gains in every subject tested, according to data released today by the Kentucky Department of Education. The data also show more students are on track to be ready for college coursework by the time they graduate high school.

The EXPLORE test is given to all 8th-grade public school students and the PLAN test is given to all 10th-grade public school students in Kentucky each September. The assessments, precursors to the ACT college entrance exam given to all public high school juniors in the state each March, test knowledge in English, mathematics, reading and science.

“We’re extremely pleased with the results but are not surprised by them,” said Kentucky Education Commissioner Terry Holliday. “Since the implementation of Senate Bill 1 (2009), we’ve been focused on getting students ready for college and career. These test results are a clear indicator of the progress that teachers and students are making toward that goal.”

EXPLORE provides an early indicator of readiness for college, provides important information for building a high school academic plan and helps students identify careers in which they might be interested. PLAN serves as the midpoint check of academic progress in high school. It is designed to improve students’ preparation for education, training and work after high school while students still have time to adjust their high school courses.

“Both tests are important tools for educators, students and parents to use when planning for the future,” Holliday said. Individual student scores have already been sent home to parents. “These results should be a topic of discussion about whether students are adequately preparing themselves for life after high school,” he said.

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In addition to higher scores, the data also show the percentage of students on track to be ready for credit-bearing college coursework increased up to 6 percent from 2011 -- depending on grade and subject, and up to 13 percent since the tests were first given statewide in 2006.

“While we have made progress on getting students ready for college, we clearly have more work to do in this area,” said Holliday. “We also need to work on closing the gaps in performance between student groups to ensure all Kentucky students graduate college/career-ready.”

In the September 2012 administration, 49,486 8th-grade Kentucky students in 322 public schools took the EXPLORE assessment and on a scale of 1 to 25, scored within a tenth of a point -- plus or minus -- of the national norm.

EXPLORE Scores from Fall 2006-12 Administrations

SUBJECT	AVERAGE SCORES							
	KENTUCKY							NATION
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Norms set in 2010*
English	13.6	13.7	13.8	14.0	13.9	14.3	14.6	14.7
Mathematics	14.2	14.4	14.6	14.9	15.2	15.3	15.4	15.5
Reading	13.8	13.7	13.9	14.2	14.2	14.4	14.5	14.6
Science	15.8	15.8	16.0	16.1	16.3	16.3	16.7	16.6
Composite	14.5	14.5	14.7	14.9	15.0	15.2	15.4	15.5

In the September 2012 administration of the PLAN assessment, 48,576 10th-grade Kentucky students in 231 public schools took the test. On a scoring scale from 1 to 32, they exceeded the national norm in every subject but mathematics.

PLAN Scores from Fall 2006-12 Administrations

SUBJECT	AVERAGE SCORES							
	KENTUCKY							NATION
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Norms set in 2010*
English	15.6	15.3	15.9	15.8	15.7	16.1	16.6	16.2
Mathematics	16.3	16.2	16.4	16.5	16.8	16.8	17.1	17.6
Reading	16.0	16.1	16.0	16.2	16.4	16.6	16.8	16.7
Science	17.4	17.3	17.4	17.6	17.6	17.9	18.1	17.8
Composite	16.4	16.3	16.6	16.7	16.7	17.0	17.3	17.2

**ACT, Inc., the parent company for both EXPLORE and PLAN, conducted a research study in the fall of 2010 to provide a new set of national norms for both assessments. This is a common statistical practice for these types of assessments. These new norms serve as national averages for comparison purposes.*

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ACT, Inc. developed College Readiness Benchmarks, scores in English, mathematics, science and reading that predict whether students are on track to take beginning credit-bearing college courses and be successful after they graduate from high school.

On both the EXPLORE and PLAN assessments, the percentages of Kentucky students meeting benchmarks in all subjects increased or remained steady from 2011 to 2012.

The benchmark scores for EXPLORE are:

- 13 or higher on the English Test
- 17 or higher on the Mathematics Test
- 15 or higher on the Reading Test
- 20 or higher on the Science Test

Percentage of Kentucky 8th-Grade Students Meeting or Exceeding Benchmarks in EXPLORE

	ENGLISH	MATHEMATICS	READING	SCIENCE
2006	54%	26%	35%	11%
2007	55%	27%	33%	10%
2008	56%	29%	35%	10%
2009	59%	36%	42%	14%
2010	59%	32%	39%	14%
2011	61%	31%	42%	14%
2012	67%	34%	42%	19%

The benchmark scores for PLAN are:

- 15 or higher on the English Test
- 19 or higher on the Mathematics Test
- 17 or higher on the Reading Test
- 21 or higher on the Science Test

Percentage of Kentucky 10th-Grade Students Meeting or Exceeding Benchmarks in PLAN

	ENGLISH	MATHEMATICS	READING	SCIENCE
2006	58%	23%	41%	15%
2007	55%	21%	40%	15%
2008	61%	22%	39%	16%
2009	59%	23%	40%	15%
2010	60%	25%	43%	16%
2011	63%	25%	44%	21%
2012	68%	26%	44%	21%

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Scores by ethnicity and gender follow trends similar to those found on other assessments.

2012 8th Grade EXPLORE Average Scores by Ethnicity and Gender

	ENGLISH	MATHEMATICS	READING	SCIENCE	COMPOSITE
African American	12.6	13.7	12.7	15.2	13.7
American Ind./Alas. Native	13.7	15.0	13.9	16.1	14.8
Caucasian	14.9	15.6	14.8	16.9	15.7
Asian	15.6	17.5	15.7	18.2	16.9
Hispanic/Latino	13.3	14.7	13.5	16.0	14.5
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	14.1	15.0	14.3	15.9	15.0
Multiracial	13.9	14.8	14.2	16.4	15.1
Males	14.0	15.3	14.0	16.5	15.1
Females	15.2	15.5	15.0	16.9	15.8

2012 10th Grade PLAN Average Scores by Ethnicity and Gender

	ENGLISH	MATHEMATICS	READING	SCIENCE	COMPOSITE
African American	14.2	14.9	14.5	16.3	15.1
American Ind./Alas. Native	15.7	16.2	15.9	16.9	16.3
Caucasian	17.0	17.4	17.2	18.3	17.6
Asian	17.8	20.0	18.0	20.1	19.1
Hispanic/Latino	15.0	16.0	15.5	17.2	16.0
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	15.9	16.8	16.3	17.7	16.8
Multiracial	16.3	16.5	16.5	17.7	16.8
Males	16.1	17.0	16.4	17.9	17.0
Females	17.2	17.2	17.2	18.2	17.6

Administration of the EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT assessments, which are provided by ACT, Inc., was mandated by Senate Bill 130 (codified in KRS 158.6453) in the 2006 session of the Kentucky General Assembly. Kentucky is one of only 10 states to give both the EXPLORE and PLAN assessments and one of only six states to administer EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT statewide.

Senate Bill 1, passed in the 2009 session of the Kentucky General Assembly, requires a high school readiness examination in 8th grade and a college readiness examination in 10th grade. EXPLORE and PLAN, respectively, are used for these purposes, and data from the assessments is included in the state's Unbridled Learning: College/Career-Ready for All accountability system.

Both assessments help schools pinpoint areas of weakness for individual students and schoolwide curriculum and make changes to improve learning. Schools analyze their individual results to inform decision-making.

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State law (KRS 158.6459) mandates that a student whose scores on EXPLORE or PLAN indicate that either additional assistance or advanced work is required in English, reading, or mathematics must have the appropriate strategies incorporated into his or her Individual Learning Plan.

See complete details on district and school EXPLORE and PLAN data by visiting the Kentucky Department of Education's Open House portal at <http://openhouse.education.ky.gov/> and accessing the College/Career Readiness section under Assessment. The EXPLORE and PLAN data will be included in the online [School/District Report Card](#), along with all the rest of the 2012-13 data, in the fall.

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See summary of EXPLORE and PLAN data on next page

SUMMARY OF EXPLORE AND PLAN RESULTS -- 2012

EXPLORE

- Average EXPLORE English scores **increased** 0.3 point, from 14.3 in 2011 to 14.6 in 2012.
 - Average EXPLORE Mathematics scores **increased** 0.1 point, from 15.3 in 2011 to 15.4 in 2012.
 - Average EXPLORE Reading scores **increased** 0.1 point, from 14.4 in 2011 to 14.5 in 2012.
 - Average EXPLORE Science scores **increased** 0.4 point, from 16.3 in 2011 to 16.7 in 2012.
 - Average EXPLORE Composite scores **increased** 0.2 point, from 15.2 in 2011 to 15.4 in 2012.
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- The percentages of Kentucky 8th graders meeting or exceeding the English benchmark on EXPLORE **increased** from 61% in 2011 to 66% in 2012.
 - The percentages of Kentucky 8th graders meeting or exceeding the Mathematics benchmark on EXPLORE **increased** from 31% in 2011 to 34% in 2012.
 - The percentages of Kentucky 8th graders meeting or exceeding the Reading benchmark on EXPLORE **remained** at 42% from 2011 to 2012.
 - The percentages of Kentucky 8th graders meeting or exceeding the Science benchmark on EXPLORE **increased** from 14% in 2011 to 19% in 2012.

PLAN

- Average PLAN English scores **increased** 0.6 point, from 16.1 in 2011 to 16.6 in 2012.
 - Average PLAN Mathematics scores **increased** 0.3 point, from 16.8 in 2011 to 17.1 in 2012.
 - Average PLAN Reading scores **increased** 0.2 point, from 16.6 in 2011 to 16.8 in 2012.
 - Average PLAN Science scores **increased** 0.2 point, from 17.9 in 2011 to 18.1 in 2012.
 - Average PLAN Composite scores **increased** 0.3 point, from 17.0 in 2011 to 17.3 in 2012.
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- The percentages of Kentucky 10th graders meeting or exceeding the English benchmarks on PLAN **increased** from 63% in 2011 to 68% in 2012.
 - The percentages of Kentucky 10th graders meeting or exceeding the Mathematics benchmark on PLAN **increased** from 25% in 2011 to 26% in 2012.
 - The percentages of Kentucky 10th graders meeting or exceeding the Reading benchmark on PLAN **remained** at 44% from 2011 to 2012.
 - The percentages of Kentucky 10th graders meeting or exceeding the Science benchmarks on PLAN **remained** at 21% from 2011 to 2012.

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